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MIDTOWN SOUVENIR SHOP OWNER AND CHINESE GANG LEADER
SENTENCED IN VIOLENT EXTORTION SCHEME

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MARK J. MERSHON, the Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Office of the FBI, announced that SHI YONG WEI, a Chinese business owner in Manhattan, was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge Richard J. Berman to 235 months' imprisonment for orchestrating and executing a violent extortion scheme designed to eliminate competition in the Chinese tourism business. On July 11, 2005, LIN GUANG, a/k/a "William"-- SHI's co-defendant and leader of the violent gang of teenagers who carried out SHI's extortion scheme--was sentenced by Judge Berman to 168 months' imprisonment.

SHI and LIN were convicted of multiple extortion counts after a two-week jury trial, which concluded on March 16, 2005. The Government's proof at the trial established that, from 1999 through 2003, SHI engineered a prolonged and ruthless campaign of extortion designed to illegally generate business for his Midtown Manhattan souvenir shop. SHI's store, called the No.

1 Shop, catered mainly to Chinese tourists. The victims of the extortion scheme included rival Manhattan gift shop owners, local tour guides and an owner of a Manhattan restaurant. SHI and his underlings coerced and threatened the victims by force in order to generate business for SHI's store.

The Government's evidence established that SHI enlisted LIN and his gang of 30 or more teenaged hoodlums to intimidate the victims. LIN and his gang of teenagers did SHI's bidding, violently assaulting victims, threatening victims with death and physical harm in harrowing face-to-face exchanges and on the telephone, and vandalizing victims' property, including slashing tires and smashing windows of victims' business vehicles. SHI also collected "protection money" from two of the victims, each of whom paid SHI the money in a desperate--but ultimately incorrect--hope that the extortion would stop. Nine victims of this extortion scheme testified at trial.

In addition to the 235-month prison term, SHI was ordered to pay \$175,100 in restitution to victims.

Mr. GARCIA praised the efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in this case.

Assistant United States Attorneys DAVID RASKIN, MIRIAM E. ROCAH and JENNIFER G. RODGERS are in charge of the prosecution.

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